

NEW TRENDS IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

Volume 31

Series Editor:

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# The Role of Technology in Conference Interpreter Training

María Dolores Rodríguez Melchor,  
Ildikó Horváth and Kate Ferguson (eds)



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Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek.  
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche National- bibliografie;  
detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data.

Names: Rodríguez Melchor, María Dolores, 1963- editor. | Horváth, Ildikó, 1970- editor. |  
Ferguson, Kate editor.

Title: The role of technology in conference interpreter training / María Dolores Rodríguez Melchor,  
Ildikó Horváth and Kate Ferguson.

Description: New York, NY : Peter Lang, 2020. | Series: New trends in translation  
studies ; 31 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019020809 | ISBN 9781788744072 (alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Translating and interpreting--Technological innovations--Case studies.

Classification: LCC P306.97.T73 R65 2019 | DDC 418/.020285--dc23 LC record available at  
<https://lccn.loc.gov/2019020809>

Supported by grants EP 04/2017-18 and DG SCIC – European Commission (Grant Agreement  
EC 10-2018-2019-SCIC.B.1 (2018) 4733309) as part of the European Masters in Conference  
Interpreting Consortium's (EMCI) activities.



Cover design by Peter Lang Ltd.

ISSN 1664-249X

ISBN 978-1-78874-407-2 (print) • ISBN 978-1-78874-408-9 (ePDF)

ISBN 978-1-78874-409-6 (ePub) • ISBN 978-1-78874-410-2 (mobi)

DOI: 10.3725/b13174

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Published by Peter Lang Ltd, International Academic Publishers,  
52 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LU, United Kingdom  
[oxford@peterlang.com](mailto:oxford@peterlang.com), [www.peterlang.com](http://www.peterlang.com)

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This publication has been peer reviewed.

Printed in Germany

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AND KATE FERGUSON

## Introduction

The advent and spread of information and communication technologies (ICTs) have radically changed the way we live and work, and today we have smart watches, smart homes and smart cities that are all driven by new ICTs. The impact of ICTs can be felt in various areas of professional activity, from medicine through agriculture to logistics and beyond. The interpreting profession is no exception to this trend: remote interpreting, computer-assisted interpreting (CAI), the digital booth and interpreting-specific terminology-management software are all gaining ground on the interpretation market. Furthermore, interpreters use ICT tools to help them with the terminological and content preparation for an assignment, while also benefitting from portable electronic devices – laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc. – in the booth during the interpreting process.

There are two main reasons why high-quality conference interpreter training must adapt to these developments and incorporate new technologies into the training content and process. Firstly, training must prepare students for the new professional requirements and ensure that they are market-ready upon graduation. And secondly, in our classrooms today we have ‘digital natives’, students who have grown up using the latest technologies and social media, a factor that cannot be disregarded in training. These two factors have urged trainers to search for and implement new, innovative approaches to interpreter training. As a result, devices such as the digital pen, double-track recording tools, transcription and annotation software, and speech banks for training purposes can serve as valuable tools in the interpreting classroom of today.

This volume explores developments in the field of conference interpreter training in the digital age and attempts to provide an overview of

also describes the methods and technologies used by blind interpreters to overcome these problems and provides advice to trainers with blind or visually impaired students in their interpreting classroom.

This volume is the product of a two-year project of the European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) Consortium, supported by the grants EP 04/2017-18 and EC 10 - 2018-19 - SCIC.B.I. (2018) 4733309. The EMCI is a network of institutions of higher education committed to providing high quality postgraduate training in conference interpreting. This is an active network whose annual activities include teacher and student mobility, training of trainers, conference participation, research and dissemination of best and new practices in conference interpreter training. One of the consortium's stated objectives is the leveraging of new technologies in interpreter training. Accordingly, the Consortium's Quality Assurance Standards advises members to regularly expose students to new technologies in the work environment and include technology-mediated work scenarios, such as remote interpreting and video-conferencing. The present volume summarizes the experiences gathered across and outside the EMCI Consortium, and may be of interest to interpreter trainers. It may also be useful for interpreter and translator training programme administrators, professional interpreters, PhD students and scholars of Translation/ Interpreting Studies, educational psychologists and vocational training professionals. Although it mainly focuses on training for conference interpreters, trainers involved in courses devoted to other types of interpreter training (court, medical, etc.) may also find its conclusions of interest.

## PART I

## New Approaches in Interpreter Training Assistance